

# Department of Justice High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project *Tampa, Florida*



## Addressing Interoperability

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Wireless Management Office (WMO) is working to improve long-term federal interagency communications across the Nation. As an interim step, and as a response to a request from the House/Senate CJS Appropriations Subcommittee staff, the DOJ WMO has been leading the High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project (“25 Cities”) to provide targeted cities with basic and immediate interagency communications capabilities among local, state, and federal agencies during emergency response. Twenty-five cities were selected using criteria that included perceived risk and population size. As stakeholders in 1 of the 25 cities, Tampa metropolitan area, local, state, and federal public safety agencies have been working collaboratively with the DOJ WMO to address basic interoperable communications.

## Participating Agencies

Partnership among Tampa area local, state, and federal public safety agencies has been instrumental in the development of comprehensive interoperability solution sets. Participating agencies have included—

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
- City of Tampa
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Florida Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Florida Highway Patrol
- Hillsborough County
- Internal Revenue Service
- Pinellas County
- Port of Tampa
- Tampa International Airport
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)
- U.S. Secret Service

## Key Successes

DOJ and area stakeholders successfully addressed basic interoperability and emergency response communications improvements in the Tampa metropolitan area through the implementation of three interoperability solutions. The solutions support the use of planned interoperability and communications systems by extending access to more public safety agencies. Additionally, in the course of meeting this project’s interoperability goals, stakeholders were able to leverage and expand the working relationships among local, state, and federal agencies to resolve interoperability objectives for the area.

DOJ recognized that several programs were working to address interoperability in the Tampa metropolitan area. DOJ coordinated with these local, state, and federal programs to offer assistance. One effort is the Florida State Technology Office’s implementation of the Florida Interoperability Network (FIN) via a Motobridge switch to provide effective interagency communications via radio system connections and access to mutual-aid channels for local and state law enforcement agencies. The FIN has more than 200 dispatch centers participating and is capable of extending access to additional agencies via interconnectivity at participating local

dispatch centers. In coordination with the Florida State Technology Office, DOJ purchased a Motobridge dispatch workstation and radio gateway unit for expanded Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center access to the FIN. Consolelets installed at the Pinellas County EOC provide connectivity to the FIN for DEA, FBI, USMS, and local hospital emergency medical services teams. FIN connectivity allows dispatchers to patch radio users to law enforcement officers across the state on an as-needed basis.

A second solution provided two ACU-T’s to the City of Tampa, two ACU-T’s to Pinellas County, and one ACU-T and one ACU-1000 to Hillsborough County to support on-scene interagency communications. These mobile audio switches will be operated, maintained, and available for Tampa area deployments.

The third solution is a 350 watt federal interoperability VHF repeater with five receiver sites affording on-street and mobile coverage in the greater Tampa area. Agencies with P25 VHF radios will be able to access this channel, which can also be patched into the Pinellas County Motobridge switch. This repeater system is scheduled for installation in summer-fall, 2006.

To coordinate use of the new interoperability capabilities, DOJ worked with the Tampa Bay Regional Domestic Security Task Force Interoperability Communications Subcommittee to identify state and federal participants to join the local agency members. The Subcommittee and area stakeholders continue to meet to discuss interoperability efforts in the Tampa metropolitan area.

## Moving Forward

The cooperation and support between participating agencies and DOJ WMO provided scalable solutions designed to provide additional agencies future access to the interoperability solutions. Sustained operations, maintenance, and support of these interoperability solutions will be coordinated by key stakeholders. These efforts, along with the State of Florida’s long-term interoperability plans to implement a statewide law enforcement radio system, will ensure continued improvements to interoperable communications among public safety agencies in the Tampa metropolitan area.

## Contact Information

If you would like to know more about this initiative or have questions, please contact—

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